



**Department of  
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## **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **VA Teams Up with American Heart Association to Raise Awareness of Heart Disease in Women**

*Health and Fitness Event Will Run During Vermont Avenue Farmer's Market*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs will raise awareness of heart disease in women, particularly women Veterans and VA employees, at a “VA Goes Red” health expo Thursday, Sep. 27, outside VA’s central office at 810 Vermont Avenue. The event will run in conjunction with the FRESHFARM farmer’s market held at the same location from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

“We are proud to team with the American Heart Association’s (AHA) Go Red For Women movement to raise awareness of heart disease in women Veterans and VA staff,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This event not only highlights our commitment to care for women Veterans, but it’s also a great opportunity to share information about cardiovascular disease and prevention.”

Activities will include healthy cooking demonstrations, fitness classes, health screenings and CPR instruction. VA’s Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey and Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Health, Dr. Robert Jesse, a cardiologist, will speak during the programmed portion from noon to 1:00 p.m. AHA President Donna Arnett, Ph.D., M.S.P.H., and chairperson of the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health, will also speak during the event.

“With the number of female Veterans and women in the military rising, and Go Red For Women entering its 10<sup>th</sup> year, *now* is the time to unite in the fight against the number one killer of women and advocate for an increase in women-focused research,” said Dr. Arnett.

“Currently, 90 percent of women have one or more risk factors for developing heart disease, so we’re thankful for the opportunity to provide thousands of women with life-saving information about their personal risks through our relationship with VA.”

VA and the AHA announced their collaboration in May. By combining efforts, the organizations can maximize their resources and share Go Red For Women's messages and tools with women Veterans and VA employees.

The farmer's market—which opened as a result of First Lady Michelle Obama's mission to make healthy food options more accessible to the DC population—provides an ideal venue to discuss heart disease prevention strategies, which include exercise and healthy eating.

Women serve in every branch of the military, representing 15 percent of today's active duty military and nearly 18 percent of National Guard and Reserve forces. By 2020, VA estimates women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population.

Visit [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) and [www.womenshealth.va.gov](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov) to learn more about VA programs and services for women Veterans.

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